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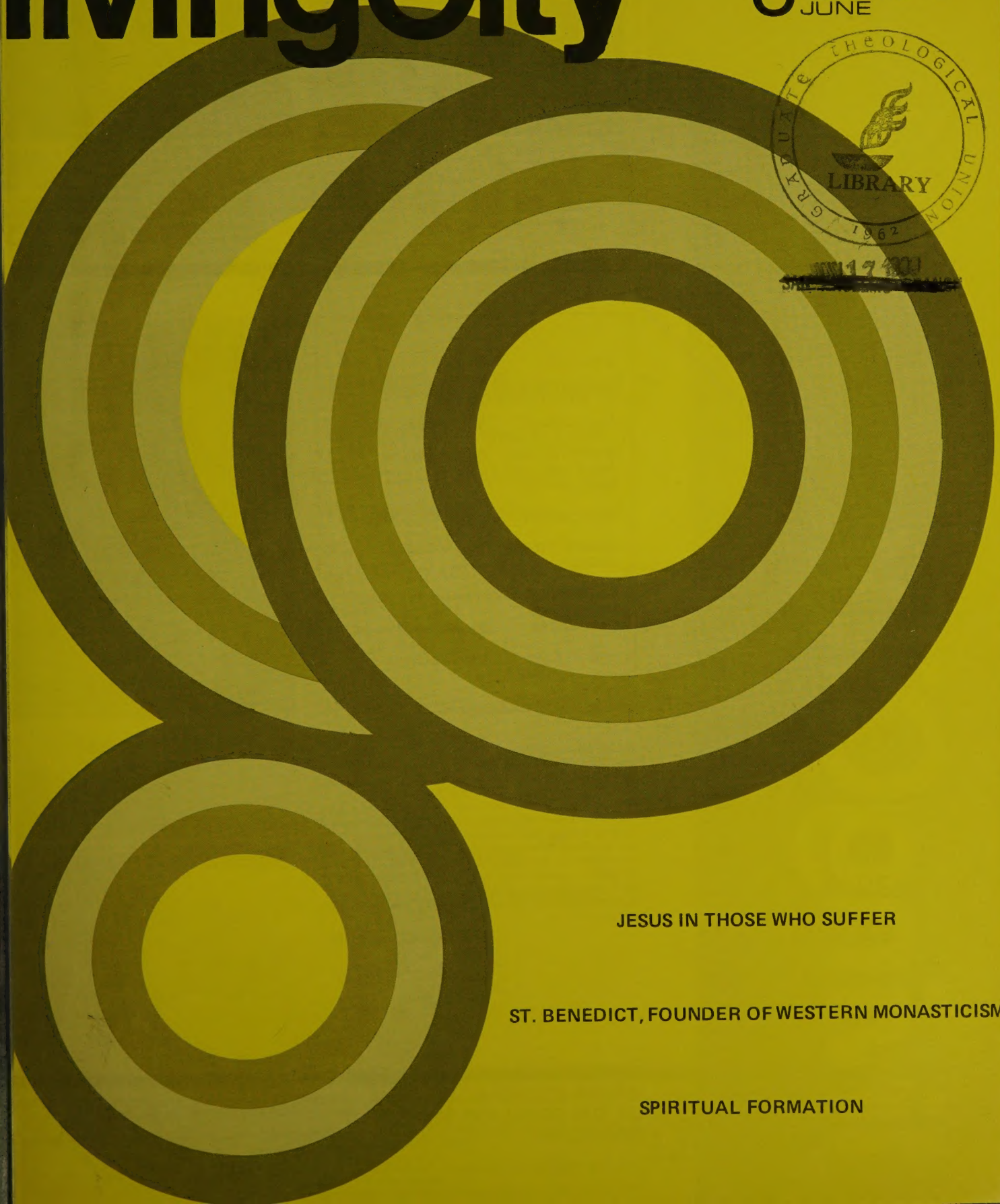

JESUS IN THOSE WHO SUFFER

ST. BENEDICT, FOUNDER OF WESTERN MONASTICISM

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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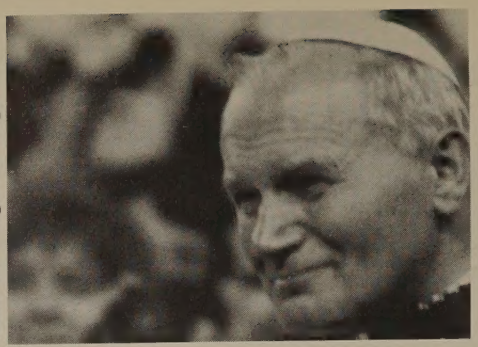

Juan de Yzaguirre Lopez

2 *John Paul II in the USA: FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH IN LOVE. "We must present ourselves as humble servants of the Gospel. Our leadership is effective only to the extent that our own discipleship is genuine. . . "*

4 *JESUS IN THOSE WHO SUFFE "Love for the poor becomes a sour of great peace and hope when we alize that, since Jesus considers as do to him whatever we do for those need, he becomes indebted to us a we become his creditors."*

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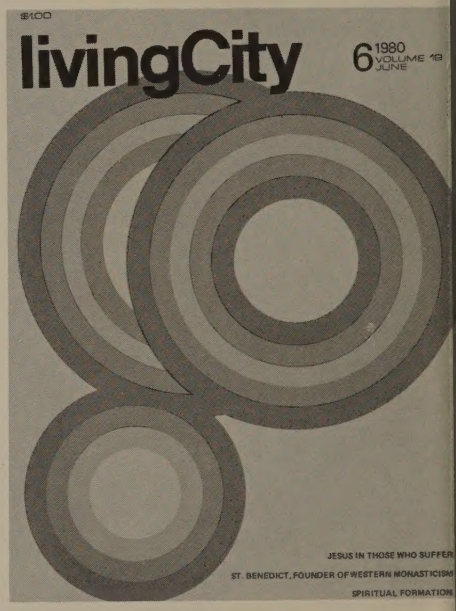

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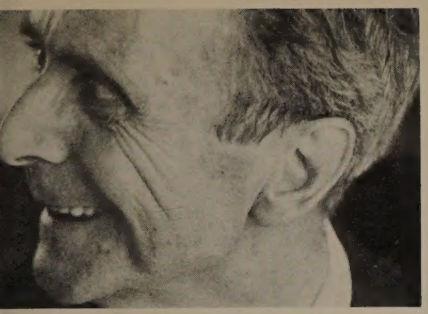
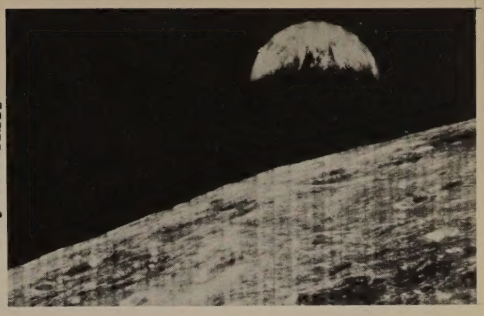


The late Igino Giordani explains how our spiritual formation, beginning in the family, should be patterened after the life of the family of Nazareth.

12 *This year the Church is celebrating the fifteen hundredth anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict. The Benedictine ideal has played a vital role in the development of European civilization. Paul VI proclaimed St. Benedict patron of Europe.*



Courtesy of NASA

18 *The foundation for our present conception of "black holes" was laid by Einstein sixty-four years ago. The possibility exists that the universe in which we live is enclosed within another universe even more vast than our own.*

CONTENTS

Pope John Paul II	John Paul II in the US: a program of life FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH IN LOVE	2
Chiara Lubich	JESUS IN THOSE WHO SUFFER	4
Igino Giordani	SPIRITUAL FORMATION	6
Christine	FIFTEEN YEARS IN TWO	8
Claude Mina	Profiles: THE STORY OF ST. BENEDICT – SEEKING GOD ALONE	12
Chiara Lubich	WORD OF LIFE	15
	EXPERIENCES	16
Piero Pasolini	Science: IS OUR UNIVERSE INSIDE A BLACK HOLE?	18
Edited by M. P.	Family Life: THE END AND THE BEGINNING OF A MARRIAGE	22

OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

IMAGES FOR WORDS	11
THE YOUNG AND THE GOSPEL	25
MARIAPOLIS 1980	26

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A program of life

POPE JOHN PAUL II IN THE U.S.

FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH IN LOVE

. . . . This is an hour of ecclesial communion and fraternal love. I come to you as a brother Bishop: one who, like yourselves, has known the hopes and challenges of a local church; one who has worked within the structures of a diocese, who has collaborated within the framework of an episcopal conference; one who has known the exhilarating experience of collegiality in an ecumenical council. . . .

Because of my personal pastoral responsibility, and because of our common pastoral responsibility I desire to strengthen you in your ministry of faith as local pastors, and to support you in your individual and joint pastoral activities by encouraging you to stand fast in the holiness and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in you I desire to honor Jesus Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (cf. 1 Pt.2:25).

Because we have been called to be shepherds of the flock, we realize that we must present ourselves as humble servants of the Gospel. Our leadership will be effective only to the extent that our own discipleship is genuine — to the extent that the beatitudes have become the inspiration of our lives, to the extent that our people really find in us the kindness, simplicity of life and universal charity that they expect.

We who, by divine mandate, must proclaim the duties of the Christian law, and who must call our people to constant conversion and renewal, know that St. Paul's invitation applies above all to ourselves: "You must put on the new man created in God's image, whose justice and holiness are born of truth" (Eph.4:24).

The holiness of personal conversion is indeed the condition for our fruitful ministry as Bishops of the Church. It is our union with Jesus Christ that determines the supernatural effectiveness of our activity. We can convincingly proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) only if we maintain fidelity to the love and friendship of Jesus, only if we continue to live in the faith of the Son of God.

We continue the publication of excerpts from the talks given by Pope John Paul II during his visit to the United States last October. His words are unforgettable. and as we said in the previous issues, a program of life to ponder, cherish and fulfill.

. . . . Guided by the Holy Spirit, we must all be deeply convinced that holiness is the first priority in our lives and in our ministry. In this context, as Bishops we see the immense value of prayer: the liturgical prayer of the Church, our prayer together, our prayer alone. . . .

St. Paul points out the relationship of justice and holiness to truth (cf. Eph.4:24). Jesus Himself, in His priestly prayer, asks His Father to consecrate His disciples by means of truth; and He adds: "Your word is truth — *sermo tuus veritas est* (Jn. 17:17). And He goes on to say that He consecrates Himself for the sake of the disciples, so that they themselves may be consecrated in truth. Jesus consecrated Himself so that the disciples might be consecrated, set apart, by the communication of what He said: the truth. Jesus tells His Father: "I gave them your word" — "your word is truth" (Jn. 17:14,17).

The holy Word of God, which is truth, is communicated by Jesus to His disciples. This Word is entrusted as a sacred deposit to His Church, but only after He had implanted in His Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, a special charism to guard and transmit intact the Word of God. . . .

Among the papers that were left to me by Pope Paul VI there is a letter written to him by a Bishop, on the occasion of the latter's appointment to the episcopacy. It is a beautiful letter; and in the form of a resolution it includes a clear affirmation of the Bishop's role of guarding and teaching the deposit of Christian doctrine, of proclaiming the whole mystery of Christ. Because of the splendid insights that this letter offers, I would like to share part of it with you.

As he pledged himself to be loyal and obedient to Paul VI and to his successors, the Bishop wrote: "I am resolved:

— "To be faithful and constant in in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

— "To maintain the content of faith, entire and uncorrupted, as handed down by the apostles and professed by the Church at all times and places."

And then with equal insight, this Bishop went on to tell Paul VI that, with the help of Almighty God, he was determined:

— "To build up the Church as the Body of Christ, and to remain united to it by your link, with the order of Bishops, under the authority of the successor of St. Peter the Apostle.

— "To show kindness and compassion in the name of the Lord to the poor and to strangers and to all who are in need.

— "To seek out the sheep who stray and to gather them into the fold of the Lord.

— "To pray without ceasing for the People of God, to carry out the highest duties of the priesthood in such a way as to afford no grounds for reproof."

This then is the edifying witness of a Bishop, an American Bishop, to the episcopal ministry of holiness and truth. . . .

A challenge for our age — and for every age in the Church — is to bring the message of the Gospel to the very core of our people's lives — so that they may live the full truth of their humanity, their redemption and their adoption in Jesus Christ — that they may be enriched with "the justice and holiness of truth. . . . "

In the exercise of your ministry of truth . . . you have, through statements and pastoral letters, collectively offered the Word of God to your people, showing its relevance to daily life, pointing to the power it has to uplift and heal and at the same time upholding its inherent demands. . . .

One of the greatest rights of the faithful is to receive the Word of God in its purity and integrity as guaranteed by the magisterium of the universal Church: the authentic magisterium of the Bishops of the Catholic Church teaching in union with the Pope. Dear brothers: we can be assured that the Holy Spirit is assisting us in our teaching if we remain absolutely faithful to the universal magisterium.

In this regard I wish to add an extremely important point which I recently emphasized in speaking to a group of Bishops making their *ad limina visit:* "In the community of the faithful — which must always maintain Catholic unity with the Bishops and the Apostolic See — there are great insights of faith. The Holy Spirit is active in enlightening the minds of the faithful with His truth, and in inflaming their hearts with His love. But these insights of faith and this *sensus fidelium* are not independent of the magisterium of the Church, which is an instrument of the same Holy Spirit and is assisted by Him. It is only when the faithful have been nourished by the Word of God, faithfully transmitted in its purity and integrity, that their own charisms are fully operative and fruitful. Once the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed to the community and is accepted, it brings forth fruits of justice and holiness of life in abundance. But the dynamism of the community in understanding and living the Word of God depends on its receiving intact the *depositum fidei*; and for this precise purpose a special apostolic and pastoral charism has been given to the Church. It is one and the same Spirit of truth who directs the hearts of the faithful and who guarantees the magisterium of the pastors of the flock."

One of the greatest truths of which we are the humble custodians is the doctrine of the Church's unity — that unity which is tarnished on the human face of the Church by every form of sin, but which subsists indestructibly in the Catholic Church (cf. *Lumen gentium*, 8; *Unitatis redintegratio*, 2, 3). A consciousness of sin calls us incessantly to conversion. The will of Christ impels us to work earnestly and perseveringly for unity with all our Christian brethren, being mindful that the unity we seek is one of perfect faith, a unity in truth and love. We must pray and study together, knowing, however, that intercommunion between divided Christians is not the answer to Christ's appeal for perfect unity. And with God's help we will continue to work humbly and resolutely to remove the real divisions that still exist, and thus to restore that full unity in faith which is the condition for sharing in the Eucharist (cf. Address of May 4, 1979).

The commitment of the ecumenical council belongs to each of us as does the testament of Paul VI who writing on ecumenism stated: "Let the work of drawing near to our separated brethren go on with much patience, with great love; but without deviating from the true Catholic doctrine."

As Bishops who are servants of truth, we are also called to be servants of unity, in the communion of the Church.

In the communion of holiness we ourselves are called, as I mentioned above, to conversion, so that we may preach with convincing power the message of Jesus: "Reform your lives and believe in the Gospel." We have a special role to play in safeguarding the sacrament of reconciliation, so that, in fidelity to a divine precept, we and our people may experience in our innermost being that "grace has far surpassed sin"(Rom. 5:20).

I, too, ratify the prophetic call of Paul VI, who urged the Bishops to help their priests to "deeply understand how closely they collaborate through the sacrament of Penance with the Savior in the work of conversion"(Address of April 20, 1978).

(continued on page 6)

CHIARA LUBICH

(Excerpt taken from the book, "When did we see you, Lord?" by Chiara Lubich, New York: New City Press, 1979.)

I think it is appropriate to read in its entirety, the passage describing the most awe-inspiring and momentous event that all of us will one day have to experience:

> When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer," "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me." And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Mt.25:31-46).

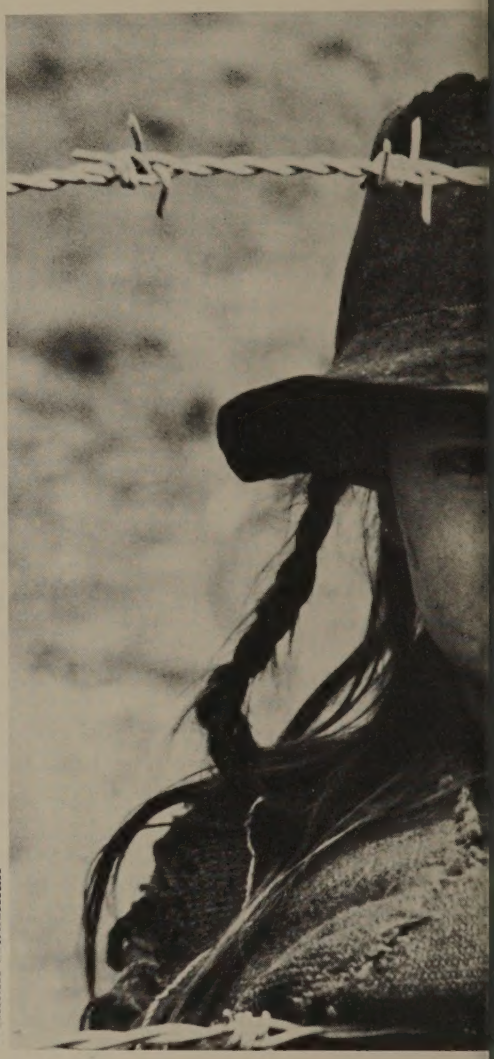
Here we see the importance of every neighbor, especially those in need. *We* are the ones who need *them* in order to possess eternal life; and if we do not care for them, we cannot escape hell.

John Chrysostom tried to open the eyes of the Christians of his day to this truth, which at once inspires fear and joy, and which then, as now, Christians often forgot:

> But we . . . do not even feed (the poor man) when he is hungry. . . . And yet if you saw Christ himself, every one of you would strip himself of all his possessions. But even now it is (Christ), for he himself has said, "It is I." Why then do you not strip yourself of everything? For even now you hear him say, "you do it to me." . . . In fact, if he were not the one to receive what you give, he would not grant you the kingdom. If you were not rejecting (Christ) himself, when you despise him in any person, he would not send you to hell. But it is precisely because you are despising him, that the blame is so great.[1]

Thinking this over carefully, it seems that of all God has commanded us to do, one thing alone is of value: love for the suffering and for those in need. It is "as if," in the words of Leo the Great, "those on the right had no other virtue, and those on the left no other sin."[2]

In reading the Fathers of the Church, I found fiery words that reinforce this truth. The unexcelled master on the subject is the enlightened and forceful John Chrysostom.



William Kaufman

Jesus in Th

The following passage in his *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* made my heart jump for joy, because it seems to me that the Lord has always directed us to focus our attention first of all on our neighbor whom we see, in order to love concretely God whom we do not see just as the apostle John tells us (see 1 Jn.4:20). Then everything else becomes worthwhile, including the liturgy and every form of worship. "So if . . . your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first

who Suffer

be reconciled to your brother" (Mt.5:23-24). "Above all, hold unfailing your love for another" (1 Pt. 4:8).

Here, then are the eloquent words of John Chrysostom:

> What does Christ gain if his table (altar) is covered with cups of gold, while he himself is dying of hunger in those who are poor? First fill him in his hunger, and then decorate his altar. Will you offer him a golden chalice and not give him a glass of cold water? What good will that do him? You obtain clothes woven with gold for the altar, but you do not offer him the clothes he needs. . . . Tell me: if you were to see a man without sufficient food, would you leave him in his hunger and set about covering the table with silver? Do you think he would thank you, or would he not become indignant? And if you were to see someone dressed in rags, and do not bother to give him something to wear; but instead, you began to erect gilded columns, saying that you were doing it in his honor, don't you think he would consider that you were mocking him, and that what you were doing was an insult of the worst kind? Then think the same way with regard to Christ when he is going about as a wanderer or a stranger in need of a roof to shelter him. . . . I say this not to prohibit you from honoring him with such gifts, but to exhort you to help the poor as well as give gifts, or rather, to help the poor before giving gifts.
>
> God has never blamed anyone for not having given gifts to adorn his temples; but as regards not helping the poor, he threatens us with hell. Therefore, while adorning his house, do not overlook your brother who is in distress, for he is more properly a temple than the (church building is).
>
> These treasures of yours (in the churches) can be despoiled by unbelieving kings, tyrants, and thieves, but what you have done for your brother who is hungry or a stranger or naked, not even the devil can take from you because it will be laid up in a safe place.[3]

And Cyprian was of the same mind:

> With your patrimony . . . feed Christ. . . . Lay up your treasures where no thief will dig them up and no treacherous robber will break in. Acquire possessions for yourself, but in heaven, where your fruits will last for all eternity, free from every contact with the world's injustice, and where no rust will consume them, where no hail can strike them down, where the sun will not burn them nor the rain ruin them. For you are offending God himself if you believe that he has given you wealth so that you could make use of it without concern for salvation.[4]

Love for the poor becomes a source of great peace and hope when we realize that, since Jesus considers as done to him whatever we do for those in need, he becomes indebted to us and we become his creditors. Ambrose affirms this:

> Lend the Lord your money through the hands of the poor. The Lord is held liable; he records whatever the needy man receives. The Gospel is your guarantee. . . . Why do you hesitate to give? . . . For you, the poor man is the Lord of heaven and the Creator of this world. Are you still trying to think how you can find a richer guarantor?[5]
>
> Gifts given to the poor put God under obligation, for it is written. "Whoever gives to the poor lends to the Lord" (Prov. 19-17).[6]

And Augustine says that the recompense we will receive from Jesus will be great:

> Listen to what you will receive in possessions from him to whom you have made your loan: "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit. . . . " Desire this, work to obtain this, let this be the purpose of your lending.[7]

* * *

1) John Crysostom, "Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew," 88,3 (PG 58,778).
2) Leo the Great, "Sermons," 10,2 (PL 54,165).
3) John Crysostom, "Matthew," 50,4 (PG 58,508-509).
4) Cyprian, "The Dress of Virgins," 11 (PL 4,461-462).
5) Ambrose, "De Tobia," 16,55 (PL 14, 781).
6) Ambrose, "Letters," 21,33 (PL 16, 1017).
7) Augustine, "On the Psalms," 33,3,6 (PL 36,388).

FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH . . .

(continued from page 3)

In this regard I confirm again the norms of *Sacramentum paenitentiae* which so wisely emphasize the ecclesial dimension of the sacrament of Penance and indicate the precise limits of general absolution, just as Paul VI did in his *ad limina* address to the American Bishops.

Conversion by its very nature is the condition for that union with God which reaches its greatest expression in the Eucharist. Our union with Christ in the Eucharist presupposes, in turn, that our hearts are set on conversion, that they are pure. This is indeed an important part of our preaching to the people. . . .

As chosen leaders in a community of praise and prayer, it is our special joy to offer the Eucharist and to give our people a sense of their vocation as an Easter people, with the "Alleluia" as their song. . . .

As ministers of a community of service, it is our privilege to proclaim the truth of Christ's union with His members in His Body, the Church. Hence we commend all service rendered in His name and to His brethren (cf. Mt.25:45). . . .

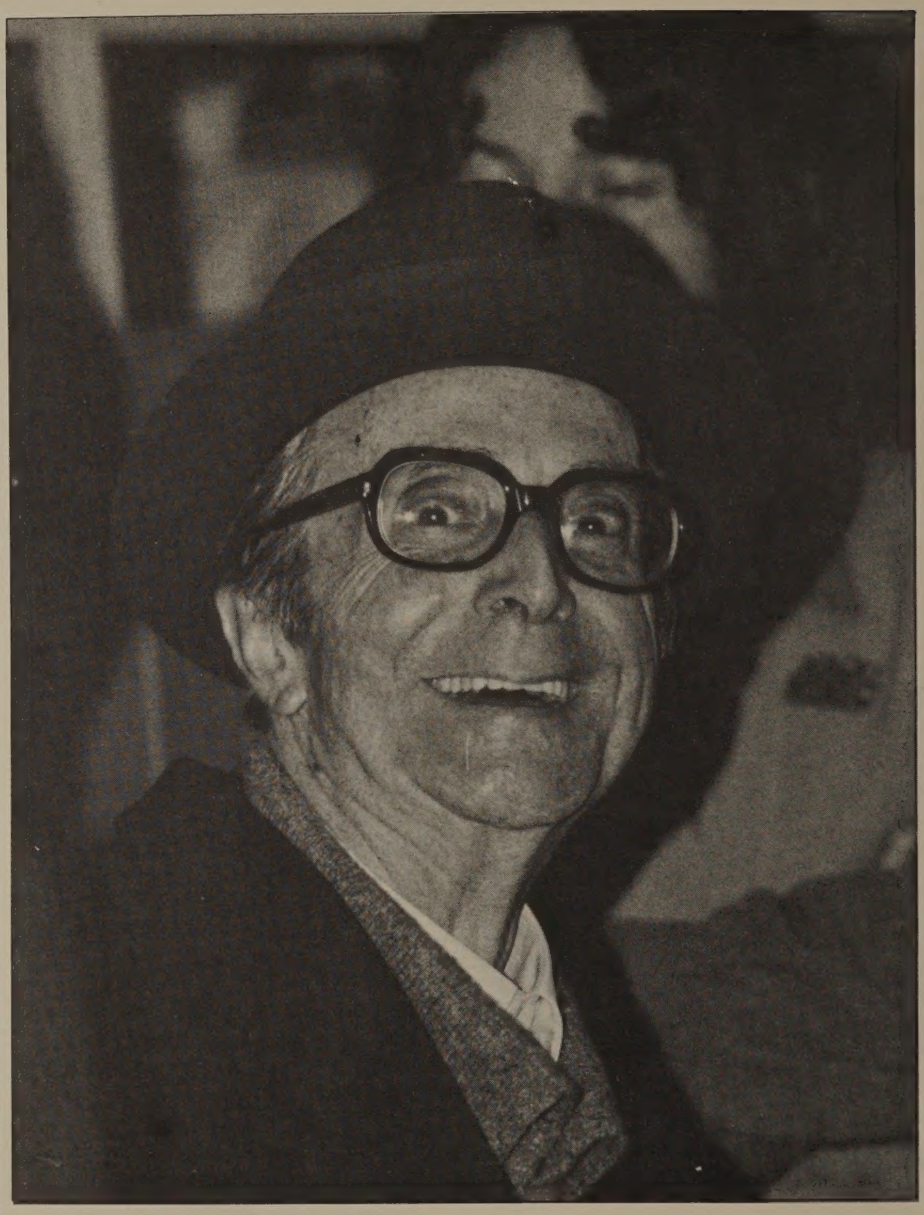
And each individual church over which you preside and which you serve is a community founded on the Word of God and acting in the truth of this Word. It is in fidelity to the communion of the universal Church that our local unity is authenticated and made stable. In the communion of the universal Church local churches find their own identity and enrichment ever more clearly. But all of this requires that the individual churches should maintain complete openness toward the universal Church.

And this is the mystery that we celebrate today in proclaiming the holiness and truth and unity of the episcopal ministry.

Brothers: This ministry of ours makes us accountable to Christ and to His Church, Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd (1 Pt.5:4), loves us and sustains us. It is He who transmits His Father's word and consecrates us in truth, so that each of us may say in turn of our people: "For them I consecrate myself for their sake now, that they may be consecrated in truth" (Jn.17:19).

(To the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the United States, Chicago, October 5, 1979) ■

IGINO GIORDANI
the first married focolarino died on April 18, 1980.



When he first met the ideal of unity of the Focolare Movement in 1948 through Chiara Lubich, the Movement's foundress, he understood that he had found the answer for the problems of our times and immediately became its supporter.

Cardinal Opilio Rossi, two bishops and about 200 priests concelebrated a funeral Mass for him on April 21st, at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa. Among those attending were Focolare members from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, as well as representatives from the ecumenical world.

Igino Giordani was born in Tivoli, Italy and was 86 years of age at the time of his death. He was the author of 90 books and a former member of the Italian Parliament.

The next issue of "Living City" will be dedicated to him. Here we are publishing an article he wrote recently for "Citta Nuova," the Italian publication of the Focolare, of which he was the first editor.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

by IGINO GIORDANI

Our spiritual formation, which must begin in the family, is patterned after the example of Mary, who brought Jesus to life. There can be no other ideal way of living together than the one that the Virgin achieved in her little home in Nazareth. While Joseph represents the Nazarene family before men, Mary represents it before God, and Jesus binds God to man in himself. It is this bond that gives Mary and Joseph the grace to keep earthly life on a supernatural level, where eternal love abides in time.

The purpose of this life together in Nazareth is to bring Jesus to life and maturity in a home that protects him from the dangers of the world: Herod, exile, the Pharisees, and so forth. Mary is the loving heart of the home. Joseph is the worker in love with Mary and Jesus, he lives for them. Jesus is the purpose of life for both.

In the life of priests and religious, the virgins represent Mary, the consecrated young men represent Jesus, to whose priesthood they aspire. The married couples remind us of Joseph and Mary.

Because Jesus is the head, all live in the Mystical body with the heart of Mary and in imitation of her, for she is the Body's mother. In the communion of saints, all strive for the sanctification of their brothers. No one thinks of himself; rather, all think of the others. So sanctification becomes a collective, communitarian act of the communion of saints.

"For ourselves, too, we ask some share in the fellowship of your apostles and martyrs, with John the Baptist. . .Stephen. . .Peter. . .Felicitas. . .Perpetua. . .Agnes. . .and all the saints." This is how we pray at Mass, where such communion is renewed every day. Now, if we yearn for such fellowship with the saints in heaven, we also yearn for it with the children of the Church here on earth, and in particular with those bound to us by ties of family and society.

Defined in this fashion, the human-divine task given to all Christians — to professionals and blue collar workers, to men and women alike — lies in bringing God's grace into this far too unhappy world. As we said before, the Christian woman of our time — though often taken in by erroneous ideas — represents an image of Mary, which means purity, beauty, and joy. She has been created for this image, which is, in the end, a great aspect of the universal priesthood entrusted to all baptized people, namely to bring the divine into the human, to return fullness and dignity to human existence, and to create a community where the will of God is lived in every kind of activity.

When the souls of young people are guided by an angelic spirit in childhood, they are open to this spirit and protected against all earthly obstacles. Children who are brought up with love are already conscious of the essential values of life. When they realize that they should represent Jesus; that they too, must be Jesus for their brothers and for all society, the results are wonderful!

When marriage is lived in this way, whether inside or outside the home, it becomes the incarnation of a new commandment of love that is actualized day by day. From it comes strength in our trials, and joy in our unity. Thus every family dwelling is like a burning fire, even in the midst of an ice-cold community. Lived in this way, marriage is the form of our cooperation with God in creating life; and God is life. This tells us how sacred and valuable is the presence of human creatures who consume themselves in this way, and how great an effect their actions can have. Then, too, it reveals the divine stature that man's dignity can reach, when he lives in accordance with the design of his Creator.

Led by the Gospel, saintly families and saintly members of a parish or neighborhood become barriers against the dangers of moral decay.

In the family, husband and wife and children are united by a sacrament in the same unity which Jesus has with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is because, as he himself said, "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they become one body." (Gen. 2:24), and one soul, united forever. Therefore, "what God has united, man must not divide." (Matt. 19:6)

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount teaches us to embrace the events of every day life continuously in order to transform them into acts that will last in eternity.

This is how we can make what is small into something big, turn what is bad into good, bring what is torn apart into unity, and remove all obstacles, distractions, and perversions from our life together to the point of turning death into life. The sermon destroys the sense of hostility we might feel toward someone of another political party, or even someone who lives in another apartment or works in another office. It burns all feelings of hostility in the flames of prayer; it confirms every good action and cancels every bad one. It will not allow any wasting of time in trying to justify certain contrary attitudes which manage to change a no into a yes and a yes into a no.

The beatitudes that are part of this same sermon on the Mount are also found in the Our Father. For, while it is true that God is their final end, they begin with our brother. They are almost a new way of applying the law of retaliation: as a man treats his neighbor and brother, so shall he be treated by the Father. Our behavior carries as much weight as our prayers: "It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven." (Matt. 7:21)

Prayer requires a continuous love for all creatures, for it is only in this love that the right condition for prayer is found. It is then that God listens to those praying as a Father listens to his children. ●

FIFTEEN YEARS...

IN ...TWO

It was springtime about three years ago. I was walking home from school. It was a beautiful day and I was enjoying my walk almost wanting to find a longer way in order to prolong it. I had a feeling that something was going to happen. Arriving home I realized that my mother was very agitated, and she called me to come upstairs immediately. She was holding the telephone receiver in her hand and she wanted me to get on the line. I tried to find out who it was, but, in the end, she simply handed me the phone without answering me.

A man's voice said, "Who is it?" "Christine," I answered hesitantly. By then I knew that it was my father on the phone. It was a very awkward situation. After all, it had been fifteen years since I had last seen him. I did not know what to say. When he asked me how I was, I simply answered, "OK, hold on a second," and I handed the phone to my sister.

While she was talking, I began to think how fast time had passed since we had started looking for him. It had been my mother who first decided that my sisters and I should know our father. My older sister seemed eager to meet him and my younger sister seemed to need to know who her father was. But I was always doubtful. I was afraid that tracking him down would only create a lot of trouble. The memory of my last encounter with him had remained with me.

I was six years old then. He met me one day after school. I had asked him why he wasn't living with us and he had answered, "I have to go away, but don't worry...I will see you again." He had taken me to a store to buy some ice cream and then warned me not to tell anyone about his visit. He had left me on a corner a block from my home.

As a child I felt bitterness and hatred towards him. I thought that our life would have been easier if only he had been there, or even shown he cared in some way. I had often wondered if he remembered us at all.

Then my mother had had the idea to look for him, but I didn't want to have anything to do with it. They had begun by contacting the Salvation Army and hiring a detective. One day we received his address. My sister wrote to him. He answered expressing his surprise at our cleverness and saying that he would call.

And here was the promised phone call. I thought I had gotten used to the idea during the time we were searching, but just the

same, I had a hard time dealing with the first contact. I had also tried to prepare myself by confiding my difficulty to a friend. She had reminded me of the sentence in the Gospel, "...as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). For me, in that moment, the "least" was my father.

He made an appointment to meet us a few days later. My mother made us all get dressed up because we were going to meet our father. When he came, he seemed uncomfortable. I realized that he only recognized my older sister so I introduced myself and my other sister. My mother had not even come out to greet him.

During dinner at a restaurant he tried to explain to us what had happened, why he had left, etc. I wanted to tell him that it did not matter. I wanted him to know that I had not come to choose sides between him and my mother.

After dinner he did not want to take us right back home. I had the impression that in one night he wanted to capture all that he had missed in those fifteen years.

We went out to the airport. He showed us around, and pointed out what fascinated him most — watching the planes.

Afterwards, coming home, he did not want to come in. I knew that he and my mother had not seen each other in years and I felt that they probably did not even remember why they were angry. I ran in to get my mother and she came out. After the first greeting, it seemed as if all misunderstandings had disappeared. He came in and while looking at some pictures, we told one another what we had been doing during those years.

I kept trying to remember to love Jesus in him, but at the same time I could not relate to him as my father. How could I call him Dad when he was like a stranger to me?

It got late and my father had to go but he promised that he'd be back. In fact, this was the beginning of our seeing him often. At first he came just for an evening, but eventually he began to stay over for the whole weekend. I remember that every time he came I had the feeling that he was trying to make something up to us.

During this period of time, it was a constant struggle for me to remember to love Jesus in him. It was through the unity with some members of the Focolare Movement that I made it to deal with this situation day by day. I understood that I had to live the Gospel in a more total way, and slowly I began to realize that he must have felt much worse than we did.

This also opened my eyes to see my entire family situation in a new way. I realized that most of them were far from God and I promised Jesus that I would do whatever I could so that they would come to know him and discover his love for them before they died.

At this point I did not know what was to come, but as it turned out, my father was seriously ill. It was very difficult at first when he found out because he tried to deny it and refused to go for the necessary treatment. When he finally did go, it was too late to operate. He had terminal cancer.

Some months passed and our relationship became much deeper at this point. It seemed to me that it was really a supernatural one, based on mutual love. For example, despite his illness, whenever it snowed, he came over to where I was living to shovel the snow. He used to say, "Just let me know and I'll come and do it for you."

I knew that he had no religion and I began to try to find ways to talk with him about this. I invited him to meet some of my friends. We had dinner together and I could see that he felt right at home. We did not talk about God right away, of course, but I knew he understood.

Through more frequent contacts, he began to feel a part of this family. I understood this through a couple of incidents.

For example, my father had always been very independent. He had lived alone for so many years that he did not like to accept things from other people. It was even hard for me to help him in any way. He lived alone and did not have very much furniture or anything. One of my friends in the Movement gave me some things to bring to him. I was really doubtful he'd accept them but instead, he was really happy. In fact, he immediately called to say thank you, explaining how these things had really changed his whole place. This was a strong experience for me because

He lived alone in a building which was old and run down. He did not have very much furniture or anything, but he was so independent that he wouldn't accept help from anyone.

I realized that my father was beginning to believe in love.

Another time we found out that the elevator was broken in his apartment building. He was too sick to go up and down the stairs, so, in a way, he was trapped. My sisters, mother and I began to take turns going over to help him and only later we understood that this happened frequently since the building was old and run down. We realized that he would never have told us if we had not discovered it ourselves. He always said that we had more important things to do.

Once I asked him if my friends could come with me to help him. He seemed embarrassed at first because of the condition of his apartment. He answered, "OK, but they can wait outside. You come in alone."

When we arrived he was really sick and I knew that he had to go

to the hospital immediately. I told him that John was outside, so he said, "Tell him to come in." This made me really happy because I could see that he trusted us and knew that no one was going to judge him for the condition of his apartment. We visited together for a short while before leaving for the emergency room.

This was one of the many times we had to rush him to the hospital. After this I tried to visit him often and everytime I had the feeling that he was more concerned about me than about his own illness. He would ask me about my studies or say that I looked tired.

After a few months of this back-and-forth to the hospital, we realized that he would have to be admitted for 24-hour care. It was hard for him to accept this because he knew that he wouldn't be coming home again.

It was hard to find a place that had an opening and the situation kept getting steadily worse. We were forced to bring him back to the hospital for a few weeks until he was transferred to a home for the terminally ill which turned out to be the best place for him. I really felt the love of God also in this.

We were forced to bring him back to the hospital for a few weeks until he was transferred to a home for the terminally ill.

He had been there a few weeks when one day they called me to come right away. He wasn't eating or talking to anyone. I was really worried because I thought that he might be in a coma. Arriving there, I went directly to his room. When I spoke to him, he said, "But, Christine, where were you?" "I was in school," I answered, "I didn't know you were so sick." He just smiled. I could tell that he wanted me to stay with him and this really touched me. I realized that all the bitterness and hostility which I had felt toward him as a child had disappeared completely. My only desire was to do everything. I could for him and be with him as much as possible. I'm certain he knew that I had forgiven him.

**There was,
and still is,
a deep gratitude
in my soul to God
because
he gave me
the possibility
to know my father,
and to, so to say,
accompany him
through the last years
of his life.**

During the months he was in this home, I saw how he cared for the other patients. They always told me that he was the one who helped the others most. He would go out of his way to say good morning to everyone and find out how they were doing.

One day my father's roommate, an older man, was sitting up in a chair. At a certain point, I went out to make a phone call. Just then the man began to feel sick and wanted to go back to bed. The aides were all busy and did not realize that he needed help. When I came back to the room, my father, who could not stand at that point, was trying to get out of bed wanting to go look for help. I tried to calm him down and went to get some staff members. When everything was taken care of the other man kept repeating, "But your father is so sick and yet he was trying to help me."

Up until a certain moment I never really knew if he believed in God or not. One day I asked him, "Are you scared?" "No," he responded, "What's there to be scared of when I know that God loves me." When I told him that he was close to dying, he said, "I know. I'm ready." I also told him that many people were praying for him. His answer was, "You know what? I pray for them too!"

He could not remember if he had been baptized so we arranged to have a priest come. However, at this point, my father often slipped into a coma, so we decided to wait until he was fully conscious.

One morning they called me to come immediately. It took me fifteen minutes to run to the hospital, but I arrived too late. He had already passed away. It was a shock for me, also because I was not sure if he had been baptized. Later they told me that the priest had done it just a few minutes before he died.

I really suffered a great deal in that moment. During those years that I had known him, our relationship had become very deep. I knew that he had suffered a lot and never complained. I had the strong impression that through this suffering he had come to know God.

There was, and still is, a deep gratitude in my soul to God because he gave me the possibility to know my father and to, so to say, accompany him through the last years of his life.
It's hard to explain but I feel that he is very close to me and that bond which we had while he was living, still exists and continues to grow.

Christine

Images for words

"I have no special revelation of God's will
My firm belief is that he reveals himself
daily to every human being, but we shut
our ears to the 'still small voice.' We
shut our eyes to the 'pillar of fire' in
front of us."
Mahatma Ghandi
(Young India, May 25, 1921)

THE STORY OF SAINT BENEDICT
Seeking God Alone

The valley where Benedict first came to seek absolute solitude. He spent three years in solitary contemplation, prayer and strict austerity in a lonely hillside cave here.

We are in Rome, in the first years of the 6th century A.D. A small group emerges on horseback from the mighty and majestic Gate of San Lorenzo. It consists of a young man and an older, working-class woman. The robust youth, tall of stature and mature and thoughtful in appearance, is Benedict. He is starting off on a journey which will lead him to a goal as yet unknown, but in his heart it bears a precise name: God alone. The woman with him is his faithful nurse who will not hear of leaving him, thus depriving him of her care.

Before them flows the River Aniene, and off in the distance lies the city of Tivoli with its numerous splendid white villas.

A few years have passed since Benedict left the quiet town of Nursia, a small city in the Umbrian mountains. His parents, who were well-to-do, wanted him to study in the capital city — so that he might get a job in the government perhaps, but even more likely, hoping that he would enter the priesthood. They were fervent Christians who consecrated their other child, Scholastica, to God when she was still a baby. Scholastica would follow Benedict in entering the religious life and like him, she would become a saint. So, this is how Benedict, little more than an adolescent, came to be immersed in the tumultuous life of the Eternal City, accompanied only by his faithful nurse.

At that time, Rome was going through a period of tremendous change. Its earthly empire was diminishing. Barbarian assaults had overcome the powerful fortified ramparts which had protected the city's confines. The barbarians had then invaded the provinces, becoming the undisputed masters there. Rome was under siege and then ransacked no less than three times in this period. Contemporaneously, however, this city was becoming the center of a more glorious kingdom, one which was spreading in a strong and unbeatable way — the kingdom of Christ. Its faith had subjugated the conquerors, so much so that in 500 A.D., amidst the thousands and thousands of pilgrims who came from the farthest lands (those only recently evangelized) to venerate the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, there was also Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths (the last rulers of Italy). Even in its outward appearance, Christian Rome had acquired a new splendor, enriched by stupendous basilicas, sparkling with gold and mosaics, and overflowing with people, men and women of rank and culture, who participated in the solemn liturgies.

Coming from the mountains, Benedict must have been impressed by all this magnificence. Nonetheless, he was not attracted to life in the city. He was even less taken by the whirlwind of student life, so libertine and aimed at self-enjoyment. He was not even completely satisfied with his studies (the reason for his coming to Rome) which he would soon abandon.

We do not know much about the time which Benedict spent in Rome, only that the study of Sacred Doc-

by CLAUDE MINA

Above we see a painting of Saint Benedict which is found in the Abbey of Subiaco.

trine completely captivated him and ignited in him the desire of getting to know God. He decided to go away and become a hermit as thousands of monks had already done both in the Egyptian desert and in all the other Christian countries.

At Affile, a town some thirty miles from Rome, Benedict took the first step. He would have liked to continue on immediately, but was detained at the affectionate insistence of some casual friends. They were a group of young men who lived in a type of monastic community quite well known and widespread at that time. (St. Augustine also lived in such a community with some of his companions. He remained there about three years, in the city of Tagaste.) These communities consisted of a group of men gathered in order to seek God together, far from the world, in the peace of the countryside. Prayers, readings and spiritual talks filled their days. Nevertheless, they did not have a monastic rule, and they kept their own possessions. Benedict remained with them for some time, but then he left because his soul longed to give of itself in a more total way. However, he left a lasting memory in that town: it was there that he performed his first miracle, and this shows us how closely he was united to God even then.

His nurse had broken an earthenware sieve which she had borrowed. She then burst into tears, not knowing how she could make amends. Filled with compassion, Benedict prayed with loving faith. . . . He gave the sieve back to his nurse completely intact. The townspeople marveled at this incident, and the sieve was hung on the door of the church where it remained from then on.

Benedict left Affile, but this time he was seeking absolute solitude. He left the town at night, unbeknownst to his nurse who would never have let him go alone for any reason. He walked for several hours, until he saw before him a green and untouched valley. There was a profound silence there, broken only by the rushing sound of the River Aniene cutting its way through a rocky gorge. It was an ideal place for the contemplation he desired. Well suited for a hermitage, numerous caves were situated on the rugged sides of the hills. Down in the valley, in the direction of Tivoli, lay a shimmering blue lake. On its banks lay the small town of Subiaco. Its name means "Sublacum," that is, "down by the lake." On the banks of that body of water, somewhat symbolic of the transitoriness of even the most splendid human things, lay the ruins of an immense palace that had been built by Nero.

There were many other hermits in the area, some living alone and others gathered in small groups. There was also a monastery. Benedict immediately met up with a venerable monk named Romanus who, as a spiritual father, gave him the garb of a hermit and blessed him at the start of his new life. Romanus also showed him to a cave in which he could live. It looked out on a rocky cliff, and was very difficult to reach. Consequently, it seemed that no one would interrupt his colloquy with God. However, from time to time in the following months the silence was broken by the tinkling of a small bell. It foretold the arrival of a small basket which Romanus let down to Benedict from high on the cliff. The monk provided for the hermit's nourishment with bread which he put aside from his own portion at the table in his monastery.

It was several months before Benedict had his first visit from another person, a brother whom God sent to him as a relief from his isolation. This person was a priest who had climbed up there to the grotto without giving any notice. It was Easter Day, and the visitor told Benedict that while he had been getting ready to eat he felt inspired to go and find someone to whom he could bring the joy of an encounter in brotherly love. And his interior impulse had led him to just that place. As Benedict had lost track of time, the priest also brought him news of the Easter feast. Together they passed the time in jubilation, dining on the food brought by the envoy of Christ.

Months and years went by. Benedict grew in sanctity, and news of this spread through the neighboring towns. Soon there were other monks

coming to see him, and they were so impressed with his charity and his teaching that a group of them whose abbot had just died, insistently begged Benedict to take his place. In spite of his own reluctance to do so, Benedict saw in it the hand of Providence showing him the way to proceed. He accepted.

> Let no one follow
> what he thinks is
> good for himself,
> but rather
> what is good
> for his brother. . .
> *The Holy Rule*

But the hermits' enthusiasm over their new spiritual father was short-lived. They would not give in to changing their old habits, accepting an orderly and regulated way of life, and practicing more strict obedience. They complained and they rebelled; finally, as the legend goes, they reached the point of attempting to poison Benedict.

He left them, but he did not resume his former way of life in the grotto. During that bitter experience a decision had formed in his soul: he was to give life to a community of monks who would really know how to go to God together. They would practice a rule which excluded the dangers of subjectivity and the illusion of sanctity, generated by outward acts of penance, which in the hermetic life of that time often took the place of true death to one's self, the fruit of obedience.

The details of the development of the first Benedictine community are not known, but it must have flourished rapidly and with great vigor. It is a fact that within a few years twelve monasteries had been established here and there on the surrounding hills. Not only people from that area, but also those from other cities (such as young Roman noblemen) came to fill the monasteries. This attests to the extent of St. Benedict's fame at that time.

Saint Benedict was born in Nursia in the year 480. He is considered the leading figure in the origin and growth of Western Christian Monasticism as a movement. Here we see a part of the Benedictine Abbey at Subiaco.

Each monastery had its own superior, but the one who watched over all of them, knowing the state of soul, the difficulties, and the growth in sanctity of each monk, was Benedict.

His sanctity and his union with God were the living rule which inspired everyone.

Years went by. The community of Subiaco reached its full splendor. And precisely at this point it was subjected to severe trials caused by adversaries, some in good faith, and others with evil intentions. Among these there stood out a priest named Florentius from a nearby church. Seeing his parishioners abandon him to frequent the monastery, he was consumed with envy. He invented all sorts of ways to discredit St. Benedict and to deter the monks from prayer and contemplation. It was a hard, long and persistent persecution.

Florentius, blinded by this time by his unsuccessful attempts to undermine Benedict, began to put terrible temptations in the path of the Benedictine brothers. Then, out of love for those who had been entrusted to him, and knowing that he himself was the object of Florentius' hostility, Benedict chose a successor and left the area, so dear to him by then, with a group of his youngest monks. They went on to Monte Cassino where Benedict founded a new monastery.

And it was here, at fifty years of age and in the prime of his life, strengthened by the experience he had acquired at Subiaco, that Benedict gave life to the most stupendous of his works. It came to life, almost as a gurantee of its authenticity, in the very midst of persecution. ■

WORD OF LIFE

". . . her many sins
are forgiven
because
of her great love."

(Luke 7:47)

". . . her many sins are forgiven because of her great love."

Have you ever experienced the feeling of happiness that comes when you have been able to unload yourself of your sins in confession, especially if it was a struggle for you to do so? Didn't you feel light and free like a bird, and have a burning desire to just go out and love — to love God and never offend him again and to reach out in love toward those around you?

If so, it means that you have felt in your own heart a little of what the great sinner in our story must have felt in her heart one day.

That morning, she had probably heard Jesus speak in the synagogue or in the village square.

He had been proclaiming a kingdom where there was forgiveness for all who had sinned.

She set out to find Jesus. She was overwhelmed by the love of God who had reached out to touch her in such a personal way, and was calling her to a relationship of communion with him.

She found him dining at the house of Simon who was a Pharisee. She went over to Jesus and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she dried them with her hair and anointed them with perfumed oil from an alabaster jar.

". . . her many sins are forgiven because of her great love."

By her actions, she expressed her deep gratitude — she showed "great love."

She was convinced that in Jesus she had found salvation. The ointment was a sign of veneration; and in kissing his feet, it was as though she were saying, "You have saved my life."

She was not concerned that she had uncovered her hair in public, which was a shameful thing to do for a woman of her time. It simply did not matter to her.

Of course, Simon, the Pharisee, could not understand the behavior of the woman. Nor could he comprehend Jesus' reaction, since it was unlawful for Jews to have any contact with sinners.

Therefore, Jesus told him the parable of the two men who were in debt and whose debts were forgiven, explaining that the one who had been forgiven more, would love more.

". . . her many sins are forgiven because of her great love."

Jesus thus showed that he approved of the woman's attitude, while he had some stern words to say to Simon: "I came to your home and you provided me with no water for my feet. She has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair."

By failing in his duties as a host, Simon showed that he lacked something the woman had: gratitude and love — even though he was law abiding and thought of himself as a righteous man. He had not had the same overwhelming experience as she, nor had he received the sense of freedom that comes through God's forgiveness. He felt neither particular love for Jesus nor the need to convert. The repentant woman was close to God; Simon was still very far away.

". . . her many sins are forgiven because of her great love."

Some people interpret these words to mean only that because of her great love, her many sins had been forgiven. But the woman's love, in this episode, was the result of the forgiveness she had already received. Her gratitude was the proof that she had been forgiven many sins. Jesus, in fact, concludes: "It is the person who is forgiven little who shows little love."

In our lives we also see that it is in experiencing the love of God that we find the strength to love and to always start anew. He is always the first to reach out to us with his forgiveness.

". . . her many sins are forgiven because of her great love."

She has shown "great love." Seeing God's love for her, the sinner loved in return. She is therefore the figure and model of the Christian, whose entire duty is summarized in word "love" — love for God and for one's neighbor.

We should not view this woman's conversion, her turning to God and his love, as if it were one of a few exceptional "great conversions." No. This lesson is for all of us. God does not abandon the sinner, as Simon, the Pharisee, believed. On the contrary, God is constantly looking for the one who is lost. His heart goes out especially to those who most need forgiveness. Jesus was in fact accused of being the "friend of tax collectors and sinners."

It is with this love that God generates love in us and establishes a relationship with us that is not bureaucratic but alive and personal. This rapport is essential if we want to be called Christians.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Gospel.

DRUNK?

"Did you all see that drunk on the corner? What a mess!"announced our teenaged baby sitter as she stopped by for a friendly visit. A drunk on the corner is a most ordinary event in our neighborhood, a mixture of renovated brownstones, tenements and projects. My thoughts did not return to him until a crowd of children, including my own, burst through the front door to tell me that I had to do something for the man on the corner who had fallen down and cut his head.

Grabbing some sterile cotton and an old blanket, I went out to see how badly he was hurt. He was dirty and in disarray and was lying down flat on the cement, but his head was not cut badly. When I asked him if he wanted to go to a hospital, he nodded his head indicating "yes," but I wasn't certain whether he spoke English. After I placed the blanket under his head, some Spanish-speaking people - who had been watching but seemed afraid to approach initially - now came over and repeated my question in Spanish. Again he said he wanted to go to the hospital. When he spoke, he had a severe speech impediment. His left arm and leg were turned in as if he were crippled. I assured him I would call an ambulance and returned home to do so.

After my call, I went out to tell the man that help was coming. I found him holding an imaginary bottle to his lips and indicating he wanted something to drink. The people in the crowd laughed and told him drinking had gotten him where he was. I decided to bring him a cup of water, which seemed safe enough. When I brought him the water, he stared at me for the first time.

He reached for my hand; I became frightened and wanted to leave. In a flash I remembered experiences of my friends in loving Jesus in the "least." I knew I had to give him my hand. He took it and spread my fingers out flat as if he wanted to put something into it. Then he groped in his pocket, pulled out a bottle and spilled out two pills. A man in the crowd said, "Those are Dilantin and Phenobarbitol. He's an epileptic."

The man took the pills from my hand and swallowed them with the water. He again took my hand, squeezing it as he thanked me in a slurred, broken voice. I realized how fortunate I was to have been able to help him.

The crowd stayed with him until the ambulance arrived. As it left, a young man came over and thanked my children and me for our help. No one in our family seemed to mind that dinner was late that evening.

D. P.

CONTAGIOUS LOVE

One evening we started chores late because I had been hauling logs that day to be sawed into lumber for a shed which we were constructing.

As we were preparing for milking, I noticed that our son Mike was very quiet and I sensed that there was something wrong. At that moment the word of life came to me: "You shall love the Lord, your God...." I wanted to try to love him so I continued to talk to him with respect. After a short while, I noticed that he was taking the milking machines off the cows, sometimes even before they were completely milked out. It was then that I understood that he was probably trying to finish the job quickly in order to see a program on T V. I asked him if there was something special on that evening and he replied that there was. When he told me what time it started I realized that we would never be finished in time. I told him that he could go when the program was to start and that I would finish the milking alone. Nothing more was said about it until the time came for him to leave. Then he said, "Dad, I can wait and help you for another fifteen minutes because they just advertise in the beginning anyway." I knew that he was doing an act of love because I was aware that they do not usually advertise that long. When he left fifteen minutes later, he was really happy. The word of life had helped me to keep loving and love had been contagious.

M. B.

PASSING BY

We have a copier in the hall where I work that is shared by every one in all the offices. One afternoon while passing by it, I noticed that the indicator to add paper was on and that there was a pile of papers stacked on the machine. I figured that while someone was using it, it had run out of paper and they didn't know how to add a new roll. I was going to pass by it without doing anything, figuring it had nothing to do with me. At that moment I thought of the word of life, "Do not do your acts of righteousness before men..." and figured this was a good way to live it because I could do an act of love for someone and no one was there to see but God. So I quickly changed the paper and just as I finished, the

person returned. I quickly moved away from the machine, said hello, and went back to my work.

R. S.

PRIORITIES

When I first took my job as a salesman in New York City, I was really naive. I thought, "Me? — a salesman in the soda business?" I thought about the strong competition. . .the deals. . .the environment. . .the way of talking — these things would be totally unfamiliar to me and clash with my way of life.

Then, one person told me: "You've got to be pushy!" Another said: "You are too nice. You've got to be rough!" And another: "Don't worry about what you'll sell or how you'll do it... just sell!"

But I could not accept such advice. I decided that I was not going to sell myself and change my personality in order to sell soda. The one thing I did decide to do was the only thing that has really shaped my life for many years now: I had to go out and love – go out and try to love Jesus in every customer I would meet.

Living according to this choice has not been easy, but it has been successful.

When I leave the house in the morning to go out to meet my customers, my "friends," I remind myself of the words of a close friend: "At the end of the day, it is not important how much I have accomplished, but how much I have been able to love."

One morning not long ago, I was on the bus to Manhattan on my way to meet a list of customers uptown. A lady with a child was asking information about how to get to a particular place in the city. Someone started giving her wrong directions and I knew that the lady would get lost, for she seemed totally ignorant about Manhattan.

Then these words came to my mind: "At the end of the day it is not important..." I decided to take her to the place she wanted to go even if it would then be too late for my appointments and I would have to cancel them.

Later, shortly after leaving her, I noticed a large restaurant nearby. "Maybe they need some soda there," I said to myself. Not only did they need soda, but they were looking for a particular kind that only my company sells and so they bought a good number of cases. It was the hundredfold.

o

Not long afterwards, I had another experience. I had a very good account with a Manhattan restaurant on the upper East side. The owners of the restaurant were really beautiful people -- honest, friendly, and sincere. But one day my company sent them a bottle of soda that wasn't good at all; as a result, they decided to order from another company. This account was a big loss for me. Still, I remained friendly with the owners and continued to visit them when I was in the area, but always without mentioning anything about business.

Then one of the owners had his first child and I felt I should bring a little gift for him. Also, I notified my company and they sent him a complimentary case of soda. He was moved and he telephoned to invite me to the Baptism of the child and he wanted to use my company's soda for the occasion. Since then he has resumed business with us and has become one of my best accounts.

V. V.

WAITING TO PARK

One day while my daughter and I were waiting for our turn to park, a man came with his truck and took our place. I would have liked to say nasty things to him but I remembered the word of life, "He has looked upon his lowly handmaid"— in order for God to look upon me like Mary, I knew that I should be like her. I remained calm and suggested to my daughter, who was angry, to forgive the man and as a result, I had peace.

K. D.

THE RIGHT INTENTION

In the office where I work most of the people who work there seem to be out of touch with God. It is quite evident that their values do not reflect any spirituality or religion. Instead, all of their energies are spent on the business world and on making money.

Each day at noon I leave the office and go to Mass at the church just two blocks down the street. Since I quietly leave the office at the same time everyday, and then return 25 to 30 minutes later, I had become somewhat self-conscious, wondering what the others were thinking. Since about 35 of us sit in desks out in one open room, I felt very conspicuous. In addition, a friend who sits behind me also goes to Mass occasionally. He is not as discreet about it and often will ask me in a loud voice, "Are you going to Mass today?" Each time this happened I would really feel uncomfortable, almost to the point of wanting to hide the fact from everyone that I was going to Mass. It became a real struggle for me. I knew it was God's will for me to attend daily Mass and yet I was almost ashamed for anyone to know, fearing they would not accept me or my beliefs.

Then, one day upon re-reading the month's word of life, which was "Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men..," one sentence in the narrative really struck me. It said, "The right intention is the desire to please God, not people." I immediately realized that what I was doing was trying to please the others in the office. I was more concerned about what they thought of me than I was concerned about pleasing God. I made a promise to myself and to God to try to throw away my self-consciousness and do the will of God for me, by attending daily Mass and not worrying about how others might judge me. Since then, each time I start to feel uncomfortable, I remember that particular sentence: "The right intention is the desire to please God, not people."

M. Z.

Is our universe inside a black hole?

The possibility exists that the universe in which we live contains enough material to be considered "closed" in the sense indicated by the theory of relativity. Are we enclosed within a universe which is even more vast than our own?

Among all the cosmic realities which are of popular interest, I believe "black holes" are perhaps the most fascinating to us today. A black hole is pictured as a bottomless abyss, a terrifying trap defying our conceptions of time and space, a gravitational vortex with tremendous gravitational attraction swallowing everything which passes nearby. It is something which captures the imagination.

I mentioned black holes in another article for this magazine in which I raised the possibility that what we commonly believe our universe to be, in reality, may not be as we perceive it. I will elaborate on what was said about black holes earlier.

Using a simple but little understood image, which I will explain later, a black hole could be described as a "pit" or a "singularity" in the ordinary space-time conditions in which we live. Sixty-four years ago Einstein laid the foundation for our present conception of black holes. The characteristic of material bodies we call "mass," according to Einstein's theories, has the characteristic of deforming time and space.

We could try to explain black holes according to the laws of Newton. Over three hundred years ago he solved the problems of weight and space mechanics by assuming a force of attraction, which he called the gravitational force. It was said to be proportional to the mass, not on the type of material involved. The mass refers to the material —feathers, lead, air, man— which gives the objects weight and inertia. The Newtonian point of view of mass and gravity can be used to describe something very similar to a black hole. Even in 1798 the great physicist and mathematician Laplace was close to describing a black hole.

The most common and simple way in which to understand the existence of a black hole is the following: Imagine a star generating heat at its center converting hydrogen to helium. After many years, having exhausted its series of nuclear reactions, it begins to contract under the crushing weight of its own mass. (In the center of a star like our Sun the pressure is billions of tons for each square centimeter of surface.) Skipping over the intermediate phases we come to the point where the star is really dead: that is, the gravitational force is no longer counterbalanced by its internal energy. An overwhelming crushing contraction of the star's mass occurs.

Depending on the star's original mass, there are three events that can occur. If the mass of the star was similar to that of our sun, it is crushed to a certain degree, reduced to a sphere of a few thousand kilo-

This is how we could imagine the high energy emissions from one of the numerous "small" black holes which are at the center of a quasar galaxie, as shown in the photo where a strange jet of material is issuing from 3C - 273. The central jet of the black hole is, in effect, material that after being thrust outward will be pulled inward and crushed by the tremendous magnetic field of the vortex.

meters, with a density one hundred thousand times that of lead. Its atoms remain intact with the nucleus and its surrounding electrons, although compressed like a spring. A "dwarf star" is formed.

If the star was three or four times the mass of our sun a more drastic contraction occurs. Even the atoms are crushed, with the electrons penetrating into the nucleus. The result is a star composed entirely of neutrons, with a diameter of only a few kilometers and a density billions of times that of lead. Quite a few neutron stars are known. Given their enormous density and small diameter, their surface gravity becomes enormous at billions of tons for each gram-mass of material. (A gram is .0022 pounds, or there are 454 grams in a pound.)

Finally, if the star is more than five times the mass of the sun, even the atomic particles, such as the neutrons, are crushed. There is total collapse. A well-defined sphere of matter no longer exists. The collapse is accelerated with everything reduced to a so-called "singularity" in just a few millionths of a second.

According to Newton's theories, for any object to leave the surface of a black hole, it would have to have an escape velocity greater than the speed of light. According to Newton's theories, however, there would be no "black hole." Light has no mass and is pure electromagnetic energy. It should not feel the effect of the force of gravity no matter how great it is.

It is only with the new conception of Einstein of the relativity of time and space that the picture of

black holes has become more complete. According to Einstein there is no force of gravity; masses do not attract one another. In the theory of Relativity, that reality which we call mass is no other than the characteristic of matter to create around itself a curved time and space. According to relativity there is no absolute, independent space or time. Instead there is a unique space-time reality which is closely linked to what we call mass and energy. Phenomena are explained in the interactions between these realities.

These ideas are difficult to grasp. We'll take them in steps. Sixty-four years ago physicists began applying Einstein's concepts to their explanations of the universe, and specifically our solar system. Around a mass, time and space become deformed and curved. Planets rotate around the sun, not because they are attracted by it, but because space itself is curved. Planets travel straight . . . in a curved space. My weight on earth exists not because of an attraction but because I am continually falling in a curved space-time close to the surface, although practically, the effects are the same as if there were an attraction. Even light is curved as it passes by the sun, following precise formulas. This effect has been observed experimentally.

Around a neutron star the curvature of time-space is very great; however, the star does not collapse all the way. If the mass is greater than five times that of our sun, the sphere is crushed even further. If its diameter goes below a certain critical value (the Schwarzschild radius) the collapse becomes complete. Here the time-space curvature is total; space closes around the collapsed mass and not even light could escape. This is a black hole.

In the black hole time-space is closed within a "hypersphere." Light continues to travel within along a closed circle; or rather, it continues to travel towards the surface of the hypersphere without ever reaching it. Everything becomes invisible and vanishes.

To our senses, there is no difference between Newton's force of gravity and Einstein's space curvature. In both there is the sense of attraction and, up to a certain point, even the laws are expressed by the same formula. At a certain point the fundamental concept of relativity must be taken into account: material mass deforms space-time. The effects of this could seem strange; however, this concept has been tested in the laboratory as well as in the cosmos. Mass "curves" space and slows down time. Because of these effects a great stellar mass without any expanding energy collapses, becomes concentrated and closes itself within a black hole.

Newton's theories may be easier to understand when trying to comprehend a black hole. However, it does not explain the fact that light, with its lack of mass, cannot escape

Issac Newton. His theory of universal gravitation does not explain the phenomenon of the black holes.

the surface. It is because time slows down and space curves that you have a black hole.

Now we come to the various types of black holes, or better, to the various sizes a black hole can be, which varies according to the mass of the collapsed star. The smallest requires a mass five times that of the sun. Furthermore, the black hole can grow in size since, although nothing can escape it, anything coming close to it can fall in, never to come out. In fact, gravity, that is, the curvature of time-space, is very great at the surface of the hypersphere which encloses the black hole. This surface is called in more exact terms the "event horizon" since beyond it everything disappears. At an appropriate distance the black hole behaves as any other star, except that it is invisible; its gravity effects are the same as a normal star of that mass. If by chance the sun were to collapse and become a black hole, it would disappear. Yet all the planets, even if reduced to dark and freezing spheres, would continue normally to rotate in their orbits.

Another fact: the force of gravity on the horizontal surface of the black hole diminishes as the black hole grows larger; that is, as the spatial temporal hypersphere which is enclosed within increases in radius. For example, near a small black hole having a mass five times that of the sun and a diameter of about 2 kilometers (about 1 1/4 miles), there would be such a large force that anything or anyone falling into it would be pulverized by the so-called "tidal effect." The force increases so rapidly as it approaches the black hole that a distance of a few centimeters (about an inch or so) corresponds to a difference in millions of kilograms of weight. If a man fell head down, his head would be a million times heavier than his feet; therefore, his whole body would disintegrate.

All matter falling into a "small" black hole becomes differentially accellerated and torn to pieces during its fall, emitting a large quantity of energy, especially x-rays and gamma rays. A black hole which is close to a large star sucks it in a little at a time. This happens frequently when one of a double or triple set of stars collapses and becomes a black hole forming around itself an enormous vortex of falling, very excited gases which emit an enormous quantity of energy.

As the black hole's diameter increases, the force of gravity at the event horizon diminishes and so does the "gradient." (The gradient is the difference in weight between head and feet, as in the preceding example). If the black hole swallowed a billion suns it would become so big but at the same time so weak that one could enter it without realizing it. The only visible effect is that of seeing the present world disappear and the appearance

Albert Einstein explained the existence of black holes with his theory of relativity.

of a new world . . . that is, the relativitistic effects of the inversion of time and space. These are all reasonably well accepted effects coming from the theory of black holes.

And here we come to the point we desired to reach from the beginning . . . There is no conceivable limit to the dimensions of a black hole. It seems that in the nuclei of galaxies there are enormous black holes which eat up thousands of stars. These black holes could result from the union of billions of small black holes which have become mutually "swallowed up." Also there can be young galaxies with many distinct but concentrated black holes in their nuclei which are swallowing material from stars and at the same time absorbing and emitting an incredible amount of energy. Then there are special galaxies, for example, those called "quasars," where astrophysicists attempt to explain events which otherwise would be inconceivable using black holes.

Scientific speculation leads us to imagine closed portions of time and space which are immense — black holes with a radius of billions of light years. Within the event horizon, matter exists following its normal evolution. Entire galaxies could continuously and slowly pass through the event horizon without as much as a minor shock, with perhaps only a change in time, or better, inversions in time and distance, while everything else remains normal.

This could be the situation in our universe! We could be living in an immense black hole enclosed within another inconceivably larger and older universe. Therefore, our universe would not be "the universe," but a zone of space-time which at one time collapsed into a small black hole and then enlarged itself tremendously continually amassing more matter. Viewed in this way our universe would be identical to the rest of the world situated "outside," except for the small spatial-temporal "tricks" suggested by the theory of Relativity, for example, the illusion of an expanding universe.

It is the theory of Relativity which has led us up to this point in our speculation. In fact, today a great number of astrophysicists are conducting serious investigations in order to determine whether our universe is in fact "closed." In order for it to be closed (which is the same as being in a black hole) the global destiny of its internal matter must result in a value which is greater than a certain known number.

At this point this is the end of our speculations concerning the physical universe. However, as I already implied in my article "Galaxies in Flight" published in Living City, the universe is not to be conceived as totally "physical" and as such it should not be considered as limited to that "singularity" of time and space, immense though it may be and enclosed within the event horizon of the hypersphere of an enormous black hole.

The total real universe is to be considered entirely differently; as a reality rich in phenomena, in facts, in beings differentiated beyond all limits and beyond any possible representation. Also we, in our microcosm are something more than the material that shapes us. We are above and beyond our physical composition, perhaps without any limits of an event horizon.●

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the end

and the beginning of a marriage

VICTOR: I grew up on the coast, where my parents had a flourishing business. I was an only son and up to the age of twenty-four I sailed through life with neither problems nor ideals. I led the sort of life that all young people in holiday resorts live, especially those with indulgent fathers and a bit of money. Then I met Julia.

JULIA: I was orphaned while very young. I had no close relatives to take care of me so I grew up in an orphanage. I started work while I was still studying, but it was too much for me and I ended up exhausted. I was a bank clerk. One of the managers saw the state I was in, and he and his wife tried to help me by providing me with some company. Through visiting them and their children I experienced something of the warmth of a family. One day, at a time when I was particularly tense and tired, they said to me, "Look, take the keys to our cottage at the shore. Go there and try to pull yourself together, and don't come back until you are feeling better." It was the end of the winter. Victor was at a loose end, and one day when we were both wandering along the beach we met each other.

VICTOR: It really was "love at first sight." We decided to get married right away. Yet I really hadn't understood anything about Julia, or about her life and her need for attention and warmth. As far as I was concerned, I loved her and that was that. It should have been enough for her.

A year later, our first son was born by an emergency caesarean section. After only eighteen months, our second child, a girl arrived. It was with the third pregnancy and the birth of Mark that the trouble began. Septicemia nearly cost Julia her life and the four operations which followed left her in a state of total exhaustion. Her courage and her will to live made me blind to her terrible suffering. I continued to involve myself in my work and in my political activities. The second great love of my life was skiing, which I thoughtlessly went off to indulge in on my days off. Since Julia did not seem to mind, I never hesitated for a moment.

JULIA: After undergoing all these operations I felt as if my body were beginning to crack and I grew more and more exhausted. At this stage, my childhood and all the sufferings I had known came to the surface again. I no longer had any illusions about my relationship with Victor. Things I might have put up with when I was physically strong, just got to be too much for me. I felt defamed and could not rely on Victor's presence or help as he was so busy with his own life. Little by little, the cracks were beginning to affect my mind. Everything pointed

to the inevitable breakdown of our family. I no longer cared whether Victor was with me or not. On the contrary, the house, the family, the children, were like a prison. I tried to get out of the house as much as possible, not caring about anything. I thought I ought to go out and enjoy myself, make friends and meet people outside my home, but to tell the truth, I soon realized that such an escape route would have become an even narrower prison than the one I was trying to get away from. I decided then that the only thing left was to escape from life itself — and I tried to do just that.

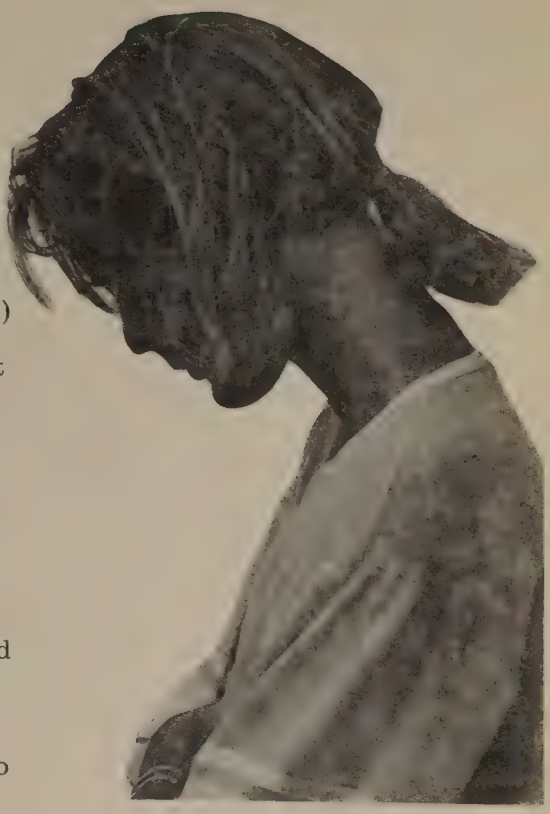
VICTOR: And so in this dramatic way I saw my castle crumble and with it my self-esteem. My wife was in the hospital and I was home with three small children and no idea how to look after them.

I was desperate, and saw no solution in sight. A few months earlier I had met a doctor who had made a great impression on me. He was the sort who believed in people and in his work. I decided to go to him to ask him how to behave towards Julia once she was out of danger and able to come home. His answer struck me as odd and quite out of keeping with his profession. "Look," he told me, "when your wife is back with you, try to love her, just as she is, without reproaching her. Try to do whatever she asks, if it is at all possible. If she doesn't feel like talking, don't you talk either. If on the other hand she does want to, talk to her, and above all, listen." It seemed an absurd prescription, rather simplistic. I was all ready to reject it, but he said to me, "Try it, just for a month. Let's give it a chance, then we'll see. . ." "Well, a month isn't very long," I said to myself.

During those first few days I thought I was going mad. It was so far removed from my normal routine that I felt crushed, completely overwhelmed by the effort. I was so used to doing as I pleased, that this attempt to please someone else was taking its toll on me both physically and mentally. Still I tried to keep going. "Just one month," I kept telling myself.

During the trial period, while Julia rested, I used to read. I had always had a passion for reading. My favorite books were those of Engels, Marx, etc. Then one day I came across one I didn't know we had in the house — the Gospels. I started reading it idly, almost as a challenge, in fact fully intending to throw it into a corner as soon as it began to annoy me. Instead, the more it annoyed me, (that is, the more it undermined my way of life) the more I felt compelled to read it, to read it to the end. I could not explain it, but somehow I found a certain similarity between the words I was reading and the attitude of the doctor I had visited. I remembered a priest who had been in charge of a parish in my town for several years. I had spoken to him briefly a couple of times and had not managed to pin a label on him — which was what I usually did to people. I thought, too, of some other people I had met recently and compared them with what Jesus says about those who want to follow him. Not only that, but it seemed as if that book as a whole was a confirmation of the particular experience I was going through with my wife. Above all, I had the distinct feeling that it was not ideas or facts that I had come up against, but a person. The old Victor objected to what seemed like giving in to a sentiment, but there was no way out of it. The truth is that I felt very strongly that I was in the company of a real friend, and from this relationship I drew the strength to go forward.

In next to no time, it seemed the month's "treatment" was finished. I went back to the doctor, not to tell him, as I had thought I would, how ridiculous the treatment was, but to tell about its effects (on me as well) and I told him then that I wanted to go on with it. Until then I had enjoyed myself in lots of ways and been interested in all sorts of things. I had been happy, but never before had I experienced what I was experiencing at that time. When I managed to contain my impatience and irritation at one of Julia's outbursts, or one of her long monologues, I experienced something completely new within



I no longer cared whether Victor was with me or not. On the contrary, the house, the family, the children, were like a prison.

me, a subtle joy, gentle and comforting, far removed from euphoria and exultation. A profound inner peace filled me. What was more, Julia seemed almost unexpectedly different. I discovered the treasures hidden within her — her limpid personality, her purity, her generosity. I was beginning to get to know her and beginning again to love her.

JULIA: Now it's my turn to go on with the story of my breakdown. When I came out of the hospital, I realized how difficult it was going to be to resume my place in the home. I could see that Victor was different somehow. In fact, little by little, I noticed him changing, but I didn't stop to think about it because I just wasn't interested in what lay behind it. I no longer believed in any of the pretenses which Victor had assumed during

our life together. "You have made me suffer so much with your indifference," I thought, "and now you think you can get around me with a few soft words."

I set myself a goal: I was going to unmask him. Naturally enough, I used the weapons I had. I tried to nail him with harsh words and stinging phrases. Sometimes, at the beginning, he would lose control and react, but most of the time he accepted everything and tried again. I was becoming very cruel, and yet, every now and again, I was left with a bad taste in my mouth. I felt wretched because the more I provoked and wounded him, the more at peace he seemed. "Has he really changed, after all?" I asked myself. How had he managed it alone? He had started to visit that doctor and his family and other people like them. Later, when he introduced them to me, a lot of things became clear. I saw in those people the same sort of attitude which had so astonished me in Victor. I sensed that this something in my husband that was eluding me was the same thing that brought these people together. They were trying to build relationships on a new basis, on a love that was quite different from the kind I had known. In the beginning, I gave them the same sort of treatment as I had given Victor, but eventually I had to yield. I began little by little to feel guilty. My weapons were blunted and, really, it was easy then. I looked beyond myself, first at Victor, then at the children, and finally at everybody else.

It's strange — because of Victor I almost threw my life away, and because of Victor, I have found life. Now, whenever we are with our children in the evening or on Sundays, and I see what a wonderful father Victor is, or when we are all together in the mountains and he is teaching them to ski, when he shows affection to me or says something funny, I feel that everything is getting back to normal, and I know that the time will come when all bitterness will disappear without a trace.

edited by M.P.

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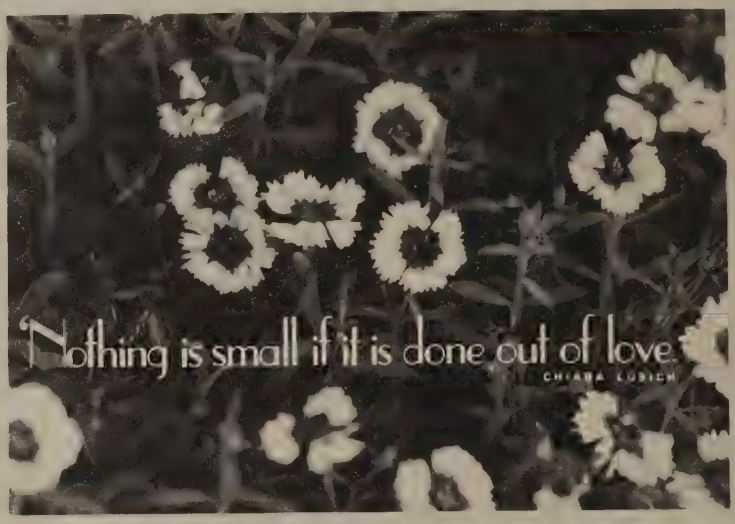

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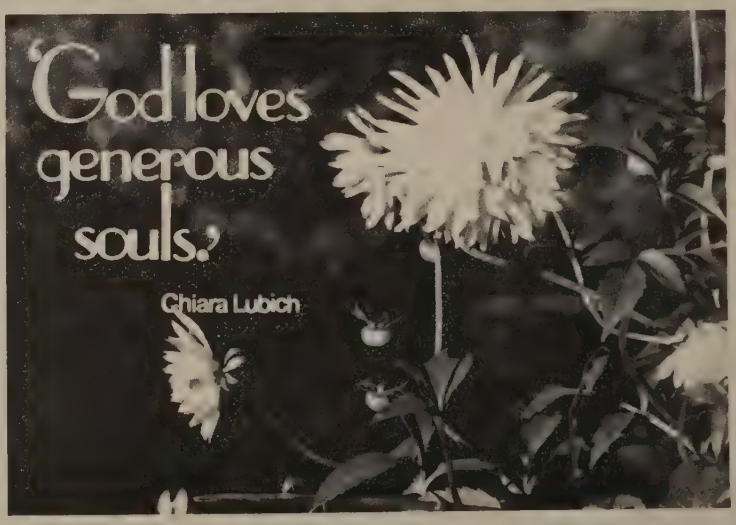

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The young and the Gospel

I was playing hockey and I was on a breakaway and instead of going in to score I passed the puck and Guy scored. I did this to love Jesus in Guy.

○

I went crosscountry skiing and we had a race and my brother cheated. I was about to call him a cheater and hurt his feelings but I remembered that Jesus said: "love one another as I have loved you" and I said: "If I was you I wouldn't cheat."

Brian, age 9

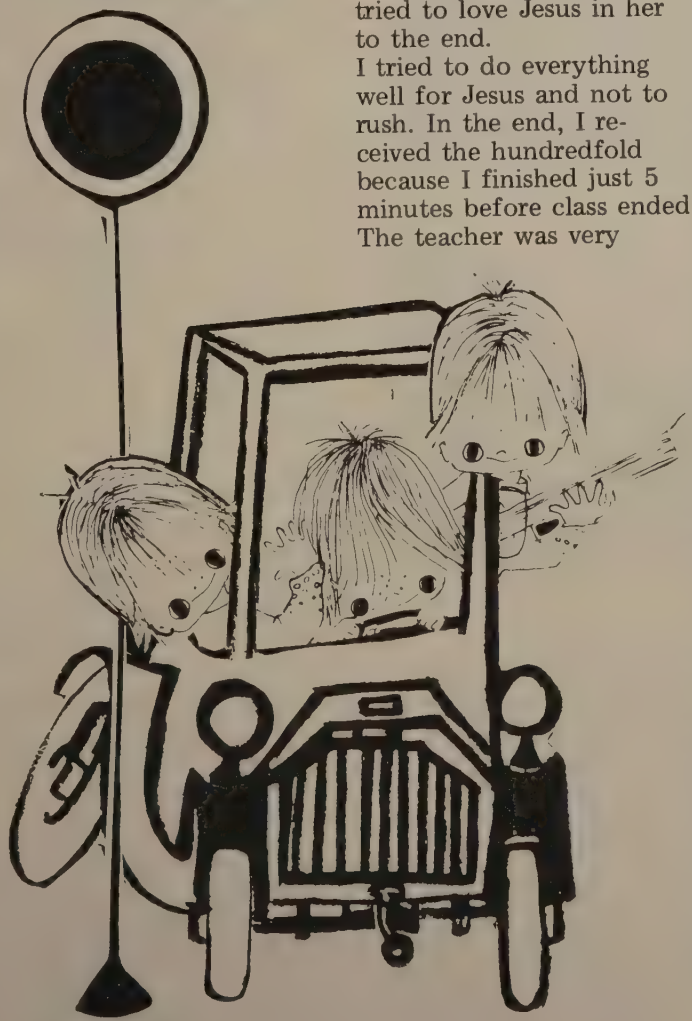
An experience I had at school. It was during a basketball game. We had a real good team. But there was one player on our team who had many problems and everyone teased him because he could never get a basket and always made mistakes. I asked Jesus if he could help this boy to get one basket so that everyone would stop teasing him. I passed the ball to him and he took a long shot that went right into the basket. That put us into the championship game. There I received the hundredfold. The game was tied and there was only a bit of time left. I got a shot and that made us win the game. After this nobody teased that boy again.

Paul, age 13

Everyday, during my last class period at school, I work at the library. I help out with straightening the books and cleaning them. One day, as I was coming in, the teacher in charge of the library started telling me to put away the books that were on her desk, then to dust all the tables in the whole library. So I began doing it. After I had finished, she told me to vacuum and then straighten out all the books. When I heard that she wanted me to vacuum, I was going to say that my arms were hurting because I had just come from gym. But then I remembered that I had to love Jesus in the teacher so I said yes. But then, every ten minutes, she would come up to me and give me more jobs to do. I felt that she was giving me too much work and that I might not finish it all by the end of the period but instead of saying no and complaining, I didn't say anything but just tried to love Jesus in her to the end.

I tried to do everything well for Jesus and not to rush. In the end, I received the hundredfold because I finished just 5 minutes before class ended The teacher was very happy and she thanked me for helping her. The next day, I got a chance to give her a "word of life" and after she had read it, she said she'd be happy to receive a copy every month.

Susan, age 15



Yesterday at school the power went out so the lights were not working and the clock stopped. When we went to our Math class in the dark hall, we saw that the teacher wasn't in.

All the students in the class were getting impatient so they decided to leave. At one point I thought "Maybe he is not going to come." I wanted to leave, too, but I remembered the word of life: "If anyone comes to me without turning his back on his father and mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, indeed his very self, he cannot be my follower."

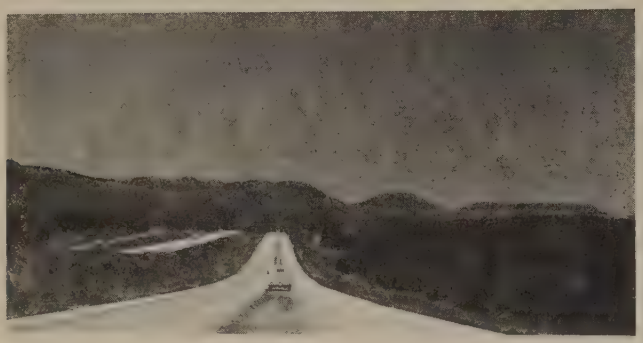
It was just like my situation. If I didn't follow the others I would be an odd ball and stay in the class by myself, but instead of doing my own will, I would be doing God's will.

So I stayed in the class while some students left. A few minutes later the teacher came and we started our Math class.

Bernadette, age 15

1980 MARIAPOLIS

THREE MARIAPOLISES WILL BE HELD IN NORTH AMERICA NEXT SUMMER. YOU ARE INVITED!



SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

DATE

June 22, after supper — June 28, after breakfast

PLACE

New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico

Las Vegas is in the northern part of New Mexico, the "land of enchantment." It is located about 60 miles east of Santa Fe, at an altitude of 6,500 feet. It is an historic community with a population of approximately 15,000 people. The main route of the famous Santa Fe Trail passes through the New Mexico Highlands University campus where — here and in the surrounding area — the "Wild West" was actually lived. Las Vegas is located on Interstate 25. Amtrak trains and Greyhound buses stop daily in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The nearest large airport is in Albuquerque, 120 miles away.

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

DATE

July 20, after supper — July 26, after breakfast

PLACE

St. Martin's College
Lacey, Washington

St. Martin's College was founded in 1895 by the Fathers and Brothers of the Order of St. Benedict. The 400-acre campus is shared by a Benedictine Abbey and the College.

The St. Martin's campus is three miles east of Olympia, capital city of the State of Washington. The nearest airport is in Seattle, 60 miles away. Inquire there for scheduled limousine service.

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

DATE

August 3, after supper — August 9, after breakfast

PLACE

Alfred University
Alfred, N.Y.

Located in New York's rustic Southern tier, Alfred University's 230-acre hillside campus adjoins the village of Alfred and is surrounded by some of the State's most scenic and intriguing attractions. The area boasts bright, mild summer days and cool, sleepable nights. The Village of Alfred, seventy miles south of Rochester, is easily reached by East-West Route 17 (Southern Tier Expressway) and from the North and South by Routes 15, 19, 21 and 36.

About the Mariapolis

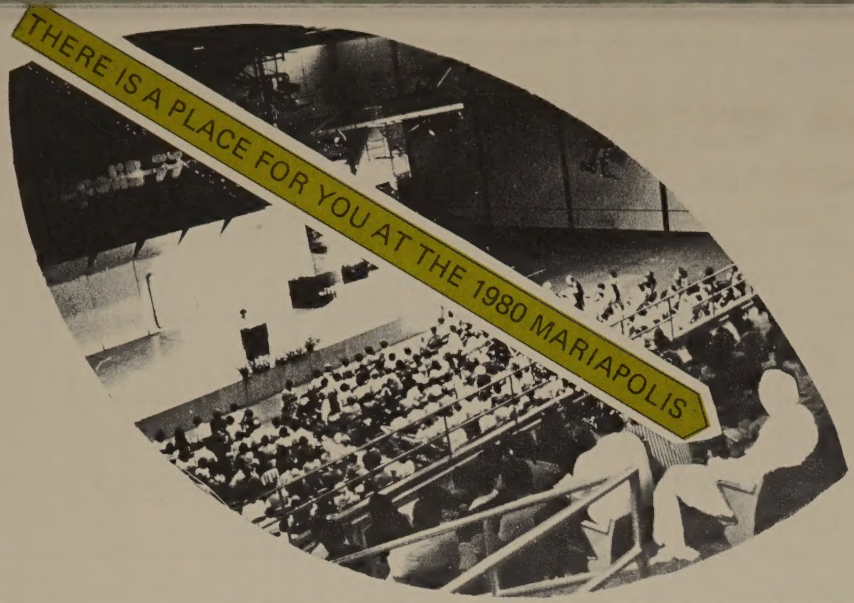
The Mariapolises are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the participants will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

For many years the summer convention of the Focolare Movement has been called "Mariapolis" (City of Mary) because Mary is the person who generated Christ. The main goal, in fact, of those who participate in a Mariapolis is to generate the presence of Christ in the community through the practice of mutual and constant charity. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Mt. 18:20). Several Mariapolises take place every summer in many countries all over the world. In 1979, seventy-seven Mariapolises were held with the total participation of over 80,000 people.

Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 22, after supper
June 28, after breakfast

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
St. Martin's College
Lacey, Washington
July 20, after supper
July 26, after breakfast

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS
Alfred University
Alfred, N.Y.
August 3, after supper
August 9, after breakfast



3 3

Terms of payment

Registration fee is required for all participants over 17 years of age. See prices in the back. Please note deadlines for registration and accommodation fees under specification for each Mariapolis.

Cancellations in writing mailed the latest 8 days before the beginning of each Mariapolis, will receive full refund.
After this date money is transferable to another person but not refundable.

Daily rates available for those not attending the whole week.

Young people 17 years of age and under should register using the same form even though fee is not required.

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

PLACE STAMP HERE

FOCOLARE MOVEMENT—MARIAPOLIS
P. O. Box 496
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021

2

- **Children under three years of age** do not pay accommodation fee; parents should bring sleeping bags or cribs for them. If a be is desired, see rate for children three years and up.

- **Young people under 18 years** of age unaccompanied by a parent must have a permission slip signed by a parent.

- **We cannot provide** accommodations prio to the beginning or after the ending of the Mariapolises.

- **Priests** should bring their own alb and stole for concelebration.

- **Pets** are not allowed in dormitories.

- **Trailers** permitted only at the Northwest Mariapolis. Participants planning to come with trailers should write for rates and conditions.

- **Special services provided:**

Children's Program - Nursery facilities

To register for the 1980 Mariapolis please fill in the registration form on the reverse side.
For your convenience this page can be transformed into an envelope as indicated to the right.

1. Tear off page
2. Cut along dotted lines.
3. Fold back lines nos. 1 and 2.
4. Fold back line no. 3
5. Fold flap over.

Before filling out this **REGISTRATION FORM**
please read carefully detailed information
on both sides of the form

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 22, after supper — June 28, after breakfast

Fees	Children ages 3-12	Youth ages 13-17	Single persons	Married couples
Registration	$ ___	$ ___	$ 35.00	$ 50.00
Accommodations	$ 60.00	$130.00	$130.00	$260.00

Registration fee due by **May 26**
Accommodation fee due by **June 9**

Simultaneous translations:
SPANISH ☐
(Please check if needed)

I/We will attend the Southwest Mariapolis ☐

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Lacey, Washington
July 20, after supper — July 26, after breakfast

Fees	Children ages 3-12	Youth ages 13-17	Single persons	Married couples
Registration	$ ___	$ ___	$ 35.00	$ 50.00
Accommodations	$ 60.00	$130.00	$130.00	$260.00

Registration fee due by **June 30**
Accommodation fee due by **July 7**

I/We will attend the Northwest Mariapolis ☐

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

Alfred, New York
August 3, after supper — August 9, after breakfast

Fees	Children ages 3-12	Youth ages 13-17	Single persons	Marr coup
Registration	$ ___	$ ___	$ 35.00	$ 50
Accommodations	$ 60.00	$130.00	$130.00	$260

Registration fee due by **July 7**
Accommodation fee due by **July 21**

Simultaneous translations:
F RENCH ☐ SPANISH ☐ ITALIAN ☐
(Please check if needed)

I/We will attend the East Coast Mariapolis ☐

NAME/S OF PARTICIPANTS	CHILDREN ages 3-12	YOUTH ages 13-17	ADULTS
	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐
	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐
	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐
	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐
	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐
	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐	M ☐ F ☐

ADDRESS: _____
Street City

_____
State Zip Tel.

REGISTRATION/S: ___ single persons $_____ couple $_____ **Total** $_____

ACCOMMODATIONS: _____children $_____ adults and youth over 12 $_____ **Total** $_____

Amount enclosed:
(Please make check payable to Focolare Movement in US$) $_____

DAY OF ARRIVAL: _____ breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ dinner ☐

DAY OF DEPARTURE: _____ breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ dinner ☐

I will come by car and can offer _____ number of seats.

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, with a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total destruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth living for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of their lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all may be one...that the world may know that you have sent me, and that you have loved them as you have loved me..." (Jn. 17,23). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the Focolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word "fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

THE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their professions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, women, and young people of all social conditions who are free of any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free and willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the Movement and with one another through large or small gatherings, publications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious institutions, can form part of the Movement too because the Movement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Christian religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. Also those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted by one or another of the Movement's aspects.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation.

Thousands of young people all over the world have been attracted by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

At the core of this large group of youth, are Gen who have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love. The Gen use all possible means to share with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

spirituality

chiara lubich

when did we see you, lord?

The extraordinary dignity of every person, each individual's capacity for the infinite, and the need to discover God in our fellow human beings are some of the recurring themes here. The question, "Who is my neighbor?" is answered in the light of the Old and New Testaments, and in terms of our relationship with other Christians, with members of other religions, and with non-believers. Reflecting on the more than thirty-five years of experience of the Focolare Movement, the author describes how, by loving others, people can move from lives that are meaningless and empty to lives that are full and, in a real sense, divine.

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